# NEW OFFLEAMS





Marine Forces Reserve Members Help Spruce Up Audubon Zoo Page 10



Facilities and Management Changes for NACC Page 11



jrbnola pao@navy.mil

# Ecurrents

Vol. 21 No. 8

Serving the New Orleans Regional Military/DoD Communities

August 2010

## Airfield Lighting Project Weathering Storms

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jordan J. Miller

The Currents' Staff

The Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB) New Orleans' airfield will have to weather the storm before it sees a new drainage system and LED lighting.

The airfield lighting project originally projected to be finished Aug. 19 is now expected to be completed in late September.

The \$14.9 million project, contracted out to Atlantic Electric, LLC, from Charleston, S.C., is funded by the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act and includes airfield drainage system restructuring, the installation of energy efficient LED lights, infrared helipad lights, wave-off lights, the extension of runway approach lights and more.

"We didn't get hit with Hurricane Alex but we did get hit with the brunt of thunderstorms and torrential rains," said Ronald Rink, airfield manager.

"Digging operations is the bulk of the work and due to the ground being saturated it has put us behind. We cannot do wiring or asphalt work in the rain," Rink said. "For every full day of rain we lose two and a half to three days of work."

According to Rink approximately 500,000 feet of wiring and electrical conduit has to be installed

to complete all lighting systems.

Due to the airfield work the main runway is not in use leaving only the short 6,000 feet runway open which results in limitations to tenant flying squadrons.

The short runway "limits the 159th Fighter Wing's F-15 Eagle aircraft to day-time use, visual meteorological conditions (VMC) and dry conditions arrivals and departures," said Rink.

He said the other tenant aircraft are limited because they have to reduce their aircraft load of fuel, passengers and cargo to allow for the short runway length.

"We do not have a precision approach or approach lighting system to either end of the short runway which further reduces their capabilities," he said.

The precision approach and the approach lighting system (ALS) allows the pilot to get lower (out of the clouds) and closer to the runway before having to go with a missed approach. Base officials are currently designing a precision approach and adding a 1,500 feet short approach lighting system to the runway to aide pilots landing in instrument meteorological conditions (IMC).

"We're proactive to get done as much as we can while it is dry and contractors are authorized to work weekends until the runway is complete," Rink said. "Atlantic Electric has been very professional in this work with no environmental impact and no safety incidents to date."



Gus Jose, right, an electrician with Atlantic Electric, LLC, Charleston, S.C., discusses work with James Olivieri, left, a local laborer. The NAS JRB New Orleans airfield is undergoing improvement in its drainage system structure and lighting to include the installation of energy efficient LED lights, infrared helipad lights, and wave off lights among other vital fixtures.

Photo by Jordan J. Miller



21 for the 4th!

Maj. Norman Singleton, Naval Support Activity New Orleans base security, fires a dummy round from the 40 mm cannon located at Building 8, as part of a 21-gun salute on July 4th. Singleton was assisted by Patrolmen Amos Cash and Larry Martin and MAI Lisa Chambers in commemorating the nation's 234th Independence Day.

Photo by William L. Timley

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By Capt. Tom Luscher, **NAS JRB Commanding Officer** 

I hope you and your families are enjoying the many opportunities that summer in southern Louisiana offers. As I write, the Gulf oil leak has been temporarily stopped and sport fishing is once again allowed in the local area, which definitely brings a smile to my face.

The Joint Reserve Base in Belle Chasse is playing an important role in oil spill response to the Deepwater Horizon tragedy. We are hosting several additional Coast Guard helicopters, and two Florida National Guard H-47 helicopters that are dropping sand bags along barrier islands to keep the oil from the fragile marsh. In addition, up to 100 Navy oil skimmer crewmen from throughout the country are berthed on the base, along with their equipment, as well as hundreds of Louisiana National Guard and Air Guard vehicles and heavy equipment. The old airfield is very busy, so if you're using the paint ball, archery or skeet ranges, be aware of the increased activity



On Thursday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>, the newly expanded and remodeled medical center was officially opened. The new facility will offer increased services to our activeduty, reserve and retired communities. I'd like to welcome the clinic's new officer in charge, Cmdr. Theresa Wood, to NAS JRB New Orleans.

We are approaching the heart of hurricane season. I implore you to keep an eye on the weather forecast, and HAVE A PLAN for yourself, your family and pets in case we have to evacuate. Remember to empty your refrigerator and unplug all of your electrical equipment if the call comes to leave the

I hope you enjoy the rest of the summer, and I thank you for serving our great country.



*In the United States, Independence Day, commonly known as the Fourth of July,* is a federal holiday commemorating the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, declaring independence from the Kingdom of Great Britain. Independence Day is commonly associated with fireworks, parades, barbecues, political speeches and ceremonies, and various other public and private events celebrating the history, government, and traditions of the United States. Independence Day is the national day of the United States.

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## **ECurrents**

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The next issue of The Currents will be published on Wednesday, September 1, 2010. Questions concerning content for publication are heartily encouraged and must be received at the Public Affairs Office, Naval Air Station, Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB), 400 Russell Ave., New Orleans, LA, 70143-5012, phone (504) 678-3260, by close of business on Friday, August 20, 2010

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**Naval Air Station JRB New Orleans** Capt. Thomas Luscher

Commanding Officer













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## Veterans Expeditions at Outward Bound Program Free Wilderness Expeditions for OEF/OIF Veterans

All Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom veterans are eligible for a free wilderness expedition courtesy of the Sierra Club's Outward Bound program.

Outward Bound is a 45-year old non-profit outdoor, adventure-education organization which serves people of all ages and backgrounds through active learning expeditions that inspire character development, self-discovery and service both in and out of the classroom. Outward Bound delivers programs using unfamiliar settings as a way for participants across

the country to experience adventure and challenge in a way that helps students realize they can do more than they thought possible.

The fully-funded expedition adventures are physically, mentally and emotionally stimulating and work to build the self-confidence, trust and communication skills necessary to help veterans return to their families and communities following war-time service.

Goals of the program are to provide a positive outdoor experience for military veterans that will enable them to experience the healing benefits of the natural world and benefit from quality environmental education.

The 5-7 day wilderness expedition which is available year-round, may include backpacking, rock climbing, canoeing, dog sledding, sailing, sea kayaking and white water rafting program. It is available to all OEF or OIF Veterans, pending medical screening, who were deployed to Iraq and/or Afghanistan.

Locations for the expedition include California, Colorado, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Utah, Oregon, Washington, Alabama, and Florida. All expenses are paid. Veterans will not be responsible for any costs of expedition to include round-trip stateside transportation to course site. Funding is provided by the *Military Family Outdoor Initiative Project*, a joint project of the Sierra Club and The Sierra Club Foundation

Call 1-866-669-2362 ext 8387 (VETS) to enroll. More information can be found at: http://www.outwardbound.org/index.cfm/do/cp.veterans.

# Navy Transitions To Paperless Leave Chits

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class John P Curtis

The Currents' Staff

In August all of the commands in the New Orleans area, along with all shore based Navy units, transfer to the Self-Service Electronic Leave (E-Leave.)

E-Leave is a web-based program that Sailors can access through their Electronic Service Record on the Navy Standard Integrated Personnel System (NSIPS).

According to the Navy-Specific Administrative Message (NAVADMIN) 103/10, the leave program was created to provide significant saving in man-hours and processing time. It will automate the leave control logs and a ensure pay entitlements are credited without submitting documents.

Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB) New Orleans began using the E-Leave program in July

"The system is a lot easier to manage and to use," said Chief Yeomen Linda Lewis, who manages the system for NAS JRB.

"It is easy to use for the requestors, the reviewers, and managers," said Lewis. "It prevents requests from getting misrouted or lost during the approval process,"

Lewis said, like the debut of any new system or process; there are a few minor complications.

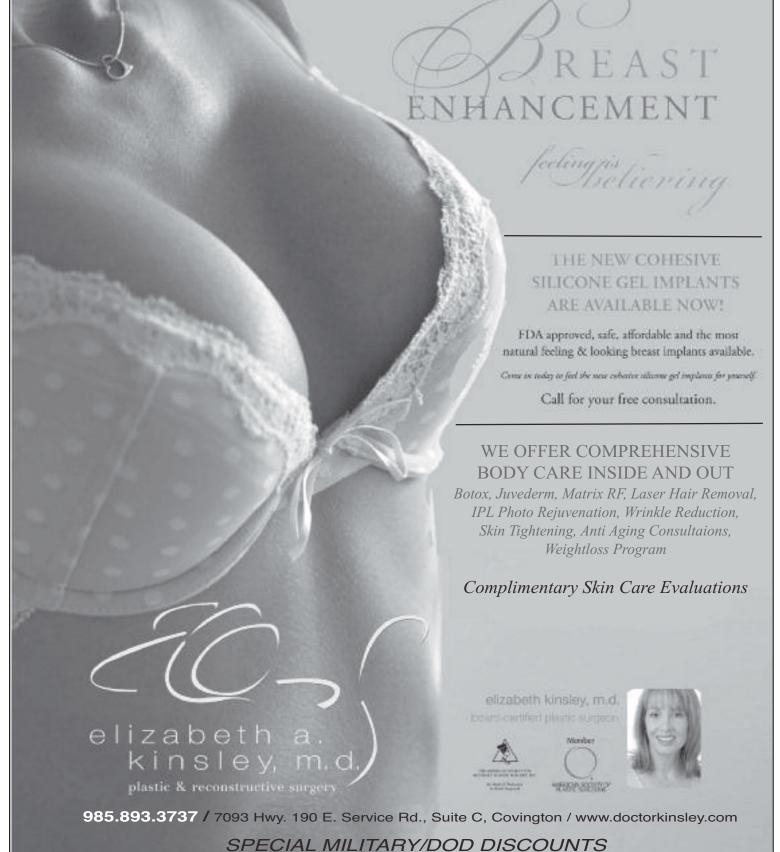
She said there is no e-mail notification for the leave reviewers or approvers to know there is a request waiting for them.

"This means you have to log on everyday to check for a new a request or have the Sailor e-mail you that they have a leave request pending," said Lewis.

Another slight complication is the reviewer and requestor have to be assigned to the same unit identification code (UIC) to be in the notification process, which hinders the proper leave notification for duty sections that are manned by personnel from multiple commands.

Lewis added that the requestor must check-in from leave on NSIPS before filling out another request.

E-Leave can be accessed at https://nsips.nmci.navy.mil.





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## Retired Force Master Chief Tom Mobley Likes it Boisterous

By Andrew Thomas **The Currents' Staff** 

Tom Mobley's eyes shine bright, and his smile speaks volumes - and don't forget boisterous - he likes it that way, said Heather, Tom's wife.

Heather Mobley spoke of a relative's visit to their home when two of the couple's sons were there, laughing and cutting-up with their father.

"I believe our relative expected a quiet, somber atmosphere at our home because of Tom's condition. She was a bit surprised, and asked me if our sons were always so boisterous?

I told her yes they are, and Tom likes it that way," Heather Mobley said.

Retired Force Master Chief Tom Mobley was the 11th Sailor privileged to hold the office of Navy Reserve Force Master Chief, retiring in 2005. Following his retirement, he was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), often referred to as Lou Gehrig's disease.

Current Navy Reserve Force Master Chief Ronney A. Wright, the 13th Sailor to hold the office, and David Pennington, who succeeded Mobley as the 12th Navy reserve force master chief, recently visited Tom and Heather Mobley, at their home in Slidell, La., 30 miles north of New Orleans. They were joined by Master Chief Petty Officer (AW) Scott Woods, command master chief at Commander, Navy Region Southeast. Scott once lived four doors down from the Mobley's in Slidell.

"A lot of people are thinking about you Tom," Wright told Mobley, "And we wanted to let you know that." Wright said Mobley was a compassionate, caring leader whose focus was always on the Sailors.

"Tom's service had a great impact on me and many Sailors," Pennington said. "I remember him bumping heads with an admiral or two if he thought his Sailors were not being treated fairly. He was a great force master chief, a great leader."

"He still is a great leader," Heather said. "Tom helps me see the big picture and is very patient with me" She said the disease affects his body, but not his mind. "Very often he will remember things that I forget."

"Heather is a blessing," Tom

Tom uses a motorized wheelchair that he controls by head movement. He is also able to "speak" using an eye gaze response interface computer he operates by blinking to generate speech.

"Tom has never been one to sit around. He is glad to have mobility," Heather said.

The four master chiefs, two retired and two still on active duty, updated each other on the Navy Reserve, on family, and inevitably swapped a few sea

"I am so proud of each of you and what you have accomplished," Tom said to his visitors. "As I have reflected on the Navy, I now consider the Navy as my family."

Wright, who was in New Or-



Retired Navy Reserve Force Master Chief David Pennington, left, and current Navy Reserve Force Master Chief Ronney A. Wright, pose for a photo with Retired Navy Reserve Force Master Chief Tom Mobley, (center) during a recent visit to his home in Slidell, La.

**Photo by Andrew Thomas** 

leans to attend a conference, said he stays in contact with force master chief petty officers who held the office before him, but with Tom Mobley, it's been very special.

"We visited Tom to honor his service and celebrate him as a shining example of a "Sailor for Life" continually striving to serve our Nation and take care of his shipmates and their families. Tom's service, and the many sacrifices of his family, have laid a strong foundation for the Sailors behind him to be "Ready Now. Anytime, Anywhere" for the challenges that lie ahead.

Anyone who may want to send cards or notes to Mobley can do so.

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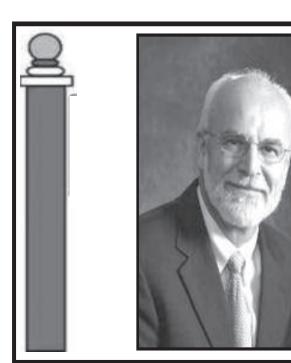
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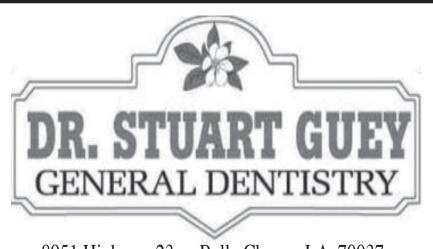
tions, practice tests and graphic teaching illustrations are indexed for easy use.

EKnowledge Corporation has extended the FREE SAT/ACT donation program through 2010. This is open to all active-duty, retired, Guard and Reserve members, veterans, DoD employees, and civilians performing military support and their and depen-

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## Passion for Sewing, Services, Stitches Quilters Together

By Tammy Prine, **The Currents' Staff** 

Military members are no strangers to service projects but the spouse of a local military retiree uses her passion for sewing to help others.

Annie Runey, whose husband is retired U.S. Coast Guard Master Chief Petty Officer Ken Runev, has sewn all of her life and quilted for the past 32 years. She is now retired from work and volunteering and twice a month meets with other ladies in a group they call the Cut-Up Quilters.

"I first started the group about eight years ago," said Runey. "Early on we met in the public library in Harvey, La., in a bakery, and at the playground in Gretna, La. One of the ladies who lives here in Belle Chasse suggested using the Belle Chasse library and we love it here. The staff here allows us to use the room twice a month and we have plenty of space, bright lights and tables to lay out our proj-

Although anyone who attends can learn a lot from the seasoned quilters this isn't a quilting class.

"We socialize while we quilt," Runey said. "We have no elected positions and our only agenda is to enjoy each other's

company and sew. We have a very relaxed group here; any more relaxed and we'd be lying down."

The ladies pick up ideas from each other and are always working on service proj-

Some of the projects (the group has completed) include quilts for local nursing home veterans, children's hospital, an orphanage in Durbin, South Africa, and the Linus Project, whose mission is to provide handmade blankets and afghans created by volunteers to children who are seriously ill, traumatized, or otherwise in need.

Runey keeps a scrap book with photos of quilts and the recipients and newspaper articles about the group and quilting shows that they attend.

The group has no age or gender limit and no dues. New quilters can join and get lots of tips and pointers on a multitude of quilting projects. Many of the quilt squares are made from donated materials. Anyone with fabric that they would like to donate for the quilting projects may drop it off to the group.

They will also accept military uniform fabric. What this group can't use gets passed along to other groups that make ditty bags to send to deployed military members.

The group meets the first and third Tues-



day of each month from 9 a.m. until around noon at the Belle Chasse Branch Library at 8442 Highway 23 in Belle Chasse, La. Anyone interested in joining the group can bring any project they are work on to the quilting. For more information, Runey can be reached at 504-392Janice LeJeune, left, a retired school teacher, sews her quilting squares by hand as Annie Runey pins together her completed squares for stitching together at home on her sewing machine. though many people use a sewing machine for all the work some quilters prefer to do the detail work by hand and the finishing of the quilt on a machine.

**Photos by Tammy Prine** 



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## Reserve Marines, Sailors Support Joint Humanitarian Civic Action

Story and photos by Maj. Paul Greenberg, **Marine Forces Reserve** 

AGADIR, Morocco — Reserve Marines and Sailors based here with Task Force African Lion recently assisted National Guard health care professionals in conducting a humanitarian civic action project in rural towns around Mo-

rocco's southwestern province

of Taroudant.

The HCA was an integral part of African Lion 2010, a joint and combined exercise led by Marine Forces Africa, with the preponderance of troops coming from Marine Forces Reserve units throughout the United States.

Over the course of five days, U.S. troops from the task force worked with Moroccan doctors to provide medical and dental care to more than a thousand Moroccan citizens who normally have little access to these services.

"It was well organized," said U.S. Navy Capt. Brian Pecha, the 4th Marine Division surgeon. "They were taking out teeth, diagnosing and treating intestinal disorders, examining eyes and giving out eyeglasses. They were doing decent things for these people. The Utah National Guard had a really nice system in place."

An internal medicine hospitalist for the State of California

in his civilian career, Pecha has spent 16 of his 22 years in the Navy as a reservist and flies to New Orleans every month for weekend drills.

Like most of the reservists here, this mission to Morocco is Pecha's summer annual training requirement.

"I think that for the most part the Moroccan doctors were really well-trained, too. One of the things about medicine is that it crosses borders. Doctors are doctors. They know their slice of medicine and are proud to show it off," said Pecha.

U.S. Navy Reserve Lt. Cmdr. Brett Alan English, a research fellow at Vanderbilt University's Department of Pharmacology, had the opportunity to work in the clinic pharmacy for a few days. He communicated with his Moroccan colleagues and patients in a combination of English, French and rudimentary Arabic

"Life here in rural Morocco is very different than in America," said English. "You can't just drive over to the convenience store and pick up pain relievers or antacid tablets nor can you go to a health store to buy vitamins and supplements. Coming here was a real eye-opener," said English, who currently attends weekend drills in New Orleans as a medical planner with Headquarters Battalion, 4th Marine Division.

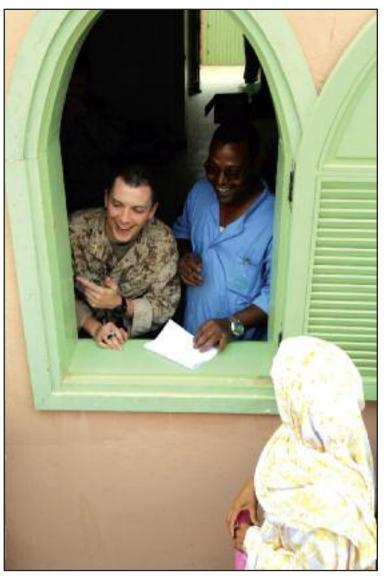
Cpl. Emilie Kelley, a U.S.

Marine reservist and operations clerk in the task force headquarters, also helped out. Kelley, who works as a health inspector for the state of Louisiana, utilized her civilian experience in the medical field to assist in the pharmacy, filling prescriptions and dispensing medication.

"It's really an eye-opener coming out here," said Kelley, who has a degree in kinesiology and is headed for nursing school next year. "It makes you appreciate how good you have it. I was impressed with how appreciative the (Moroccan) people were. They stood in line for hours waiting to be seen, to pick up their medication, and they still had smiles on their faces."

This is the seventh year in a row that the Marine Corps has conducted African Lion, and a more robust reserve presence is planned for exercise next year.

"Overall, it's a great training opportunity for us being engaged in a real-world mission providing care to a population that is culturally different, with language hurdles to overcome," said Utah National Guard Col. Paul Byrd, the U.S. medical team commanding officer for the HCA. "But there is a similarity that our docs can identify with: we have people who need medical care that we can provide, and we're glad to do it."



U.S. Navy Reserve Lt. Cmdr. Brett English (left) and a Moroccan Army pharmacy technician dispense medication at a clinic in Agadir, Morocco, during a humanitarian civic action mission. The HCA was part of African Lion 2010. a joint and combined exercise led by Marine Forces Africa, with about 700 Marines and Sailors coming from Marine Forces Reserve units throughout the United States.

Photo by Maj. Paul Greenberg

## Marine Forces Reserve Members Help Spruce Up Audubon Zoo



Lance Cpl. Daniel Teriele, a finance technician with Mobilization Command, Marine Forces Reserve, feeds a soy biscuit to a giraffe after a day of volunteering at the Audubon Zoo. Teriele and other Marines helped clean the zoo by trimming grass and clearing excess brush in animal exhibits. At the end of the day the volunteers were afforded a special treat and allowed to get up close to feed the giraffes.



**Gunnery Sgt. Leonardo** Garcia, an aviation maintenance administrative training coordinator with 4th Marine Aircraft Wing, Marine Forces Reserve, puts toxic plant trimmings into a wheelbarrow during a day of volunteering to clean up exhibits at the Audubon Zoo in New Orleans. Garcia was one of four Marine volunteers who gave time to clean up the zoo by trimming grass, and clearing excess brush in animal exhibits.

Photos by Lance Cpl. Lucas Vega

## **Facilities and Management Changes for NACC**



Cmdr. Theresa Wood, right, officer in charge for NACC and Capt. Maryalice Morro, commanding officer, Naval Hospital Pensacola, Fl., watch as the center's newest and most seasoned employees do the honor of cutting the ribbon. The cutting of the ribbon officially opens the new Naval Ambulatory Care Center.



Cmdr. Theresa Wood, U.S. Navy Nurse Corps and officer in charge of the Naval Ambulatory Care Center at NAS JRB New Orleans, addresses the audience after her assumption of charge ceremony.

**Photo by Tammy Prine** 





By Tammy Prine **The Currents' Staff** 

The new and renovated Naval Ambulatory Care Center facilities at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans are open and under new leader-

Cmdr. Theresa Wood's assumption of charge was followed by the official opening and dedication ceremony for the partially new and partially renovated medical facility.

Capt. Maryalice Morro, commanding officer, Naval Hospital Pensacola, Fl., said the combining of the medical centers into one will help everyone involved



"This beautiful center brings together all of the Westbank medical services," Morro said. "Being separated in three different locations made it hard to get team unity and camaraderie within the ranks."

In 2011 when Naval Support Activity Eastbank closes, the remaining medical services will move to NAS JRB.

Medical coverage for active-duty military members in the New Orleans area was modernized in 1976 with the opening of the F. Edward Hebert Naval Hospital at Naval Support Activity New Orleans. Over the years the Navy made changes to the services and it became an outpatient facility in 1978. In 1998 the facility was officially named NACC as a branch of Naval Hospital Pensacola.

The Base Realignment and Closure Commission of 2005 directed the closing of NSA, the host site for NACC New Orleans. At that time the center encompassed three sites: the main clinic at NSA Westbank, a branch clinic at NSA Eastbank and a clinic at NAS

"This new center will allow us to deliver state-of-the-art health care that people deserve at the best of our ability," said Morro.

The \$11.2 million medical/dental project that took a little more than two and a half years to complete, included an addition of 14,992 square feet and renovations to 18,165 square feet.

"A big transition took place here,"

said Wood. "I wasn't here with the heartaches that often come with getting a large project as this to the finishing point. I am coming into a smoothly running facility."

**Photos by Tammy Prine** 

Wood said her staff takes care of people in their most trying times.

"It's a huge responsibility for the staff here," she said. "But my job is easy. I take care of the people who take care of the people of this country."

The NACC serves a patient population of more than 20,000 people in the New Orleans area with such diverse services as dental, family practice, laboratory, pharmacy and more.

The NACC will officially be renamed Naval Branch Health Clinic Belle Chasse on Oct. 1.

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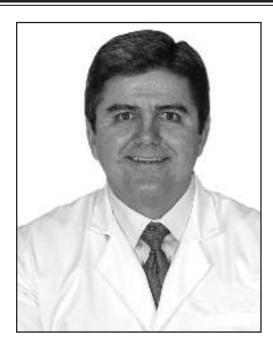
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## **Monumental Nationwide Increase in Spinal Fusion**

George Van Wormer, DC

A prestigious medical research team from Dartmouth Medical School discovered that rates of lumbar fusion in the United States have increased more than 250 percent over the past decade. These rates represent the highest rates of spine surgery in the world, despite incidence and prevalence rates of spine disorders that are similar to those found in other countries.

The lead author, Dr. James N. Weinstein, Chairman of Orthopedic Surgery, Professor and Editor-in-Chief of Spine (the leading peer-reviewed journal on the study of the spine), also found that spending for lumbar fusion increased more than 500%. Equally disturbing was a nearly 20-fold variation in regional rates of lumbar fusion. This represents the largest variation seen with any surgical procedure. The research team was unable to find a clinical or scientific reason to explain the increase in the rate of surgery or the large variation among regions.

Another distinguished medical research team speculates that the increase in fusion rates maybe related to the recent introduction of spinal cage devices (A spinal cage is a small hollow cylindrical device, usually made of titanium, with perforated walls). Cage devices have been brought forth based on Food and Drug Administration criteria for safety, but there are no clinical trials demonstrating their efficacy or effectiveness.

Fusion with cages increased over 1600% between 1996 and 2001. Regretfully, the increased use of cages has not improved disability, complication or re-operation rates. Moreover, considering the unimpressive outcomes and the fact that cage device surgeries cost more than non-cage surgeries, the use of this technology is unwarranted.

In light of this medical research, patients with moderate to severe low back (and/or leg) pain might consider a more conservative treatment regime (manipulation and exercise) before considering surgery.

Dr. George Van Wormer is a chiropractor in Harvey specializing in the non-surgical treatment of spinal conditions. Call (504) 362-3000 for more information.

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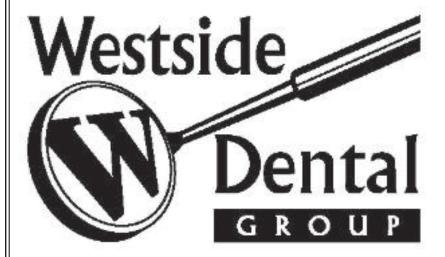
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## Vannice Takes Command of the Night Wolves

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class John P. Curtis

The Currents' Staff

Cmdr. Jay Vannice relieved Cmdr David Fritz as the commanding officer of Airborne Early Warning Squadron (VAW) 77 during a change of command ceremony June 25.

Fritz transferred command authority of the E2-C Hawkeye squadron, affectionately known as the Night Wolves, to Vannice inside their hangar on Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB) New Orleans.

The guest speaker was Deputy Naval Air Forces commander, Naval Air Force Reserve Deputy, Navy Region Southwest, Capt. Bryan Cutchen,

"Both of these officers have dealt with significant changes during their careers," said Cutchen. "They have seen opportunity in change instead of strife and possibilities vice limitations."

"Fritz has demonstrated his ability to deal with change effectively and has led, not managed, this squadron to succeed," he added.

Fritz reported to the command as the executive officer in September of 2007, before taking command in March 2009.

Since then the command has had five major deployments, 30 forward detachments and participated in nine joint task forces supporting the president's drug interdiction campaign, Tactical Support Wing and United States Southern Command.

The reserve squadron has disrupted \$2.5 billion in illegal narcotics, assisted in the rescue of nine civilians lost at sea and disrupted a semi-submersible drug boats.

Fritz said the command is not great because of one or two great Sailors; it is because each sailor contributes their best.

"I have marveled at how this squadron, this team, always pull together to face adversity head-on. No matter what the obstacle is," said Fritz.

After an exchange of salutes Vannice took command of VAW-77.

"It is no wonder why VAW 77 is the pearl of the Navy Reserve Force," said Vannice

"It was not due to magic dust or great fortune; but the exceptional direction and clear guidance that fostered loyalty and the dedication of the Nightwolves' family," said Vannice. "I congratulate Skipper Fritz on your spectacular tour."

Vannice has been serving as executive officer for the Night Wolves since March 2009.

He graduated from Western Washington University in December of 1989 and after receiving his commission through aviation officer candidate school, he was designated a Naval aviator in 1992.

During his career he was recipient of the 1997 Commander Airborne Early Warning Wing Pilot of the Year Award for shore commands



Cmdr. Jay Vannice, commanding officer of Airborne Early Warning Squadron (VAW) 77, addresses the audience after taking command from Cmdr. David Fritz.

Photo by MC2 John Curtis

## Night Wolves Earn Top Navy Air Force Reserve Award

By Andrew Thomas **The Currents' Staff** 

The Night Wolves of Airborne Early Warning Squadron (VAW) 77 based at

Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans, were recently recognized as the Naval Reserve Squadron of the Year, being awarded the Commander Naval Air Force Reserve Squadron of Excellence Award Tro-

phy

In an all-hands meeting, Rear Adm. Patrick E. McGrath, commander, Naval Air Forces Reserve, presented the award in the squadron's ready room. McGrath said that each year the Night Wolves were in the running for the award, and that this consistency is one of the qualities that garnered top honors this year.

The admiral also encouraged every squadron member to "lay hands" on the trophy, akin to the passing of hockey's Stanley Cup, as the trophy was passed from shipmate to shipmate, making its way through the ready room.

Pilots with VAW-77 fly the E-2C Hawkeye, an airborne early warning aircraft optimized for counter-drug missions. As part of the Navy's post-Cold War role, VAW-77 flight crews patrol the waters of the Caribbean in joint missions with the U.S. Coast Guard and other drug enforcement agencies in search of illegal aircraft and ships.

The officers and enlisted members of VAW-77 are a mix of selected Reservists and full-time support (FTS) personnel. The aircraft are serviced and maintained by Northrop Grumman civilian contractors who also deploy with the squadron.

## Belle Chasse Academy Meetings Notices

**Board of Directors** 

July Meeting 5 July 2010 • 7 p.m. at BCA
August Meeting 2 August 2010 • 7 p.m. at BCA

Please check the BCA web site for Board of Directors Committees Meetings and PTO Meeting S CHASSE ACTUAL TO THE PARTY OF THE PARTY OF

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Lt. Cmdr. Russ Herrell, VAW-77, carefully passes the Commander Naval Air Force Reserve Squadron of Excellence Award trophy to Mike Derosa, Northrup Grumman. Every member of VAW-77 admired the trophy for a few moments as it was passed through the squadron's ready room.

Photo by Andrew Thomas











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## Smoke Alarms: A Sound You Can Live With

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has announced the theme for this year's Fire Prevention Week: Smoke Alarms: A sound you can live with.

The 2010 Fire Prevention Week will be October 3-9. Each year in October since 1922, the NFPA has sponsored the fire prevention campaign to emphasize the importance of fire safety and to inspire individuals to take action to prevent fires and avoid the deaths, injuries, and destruction they cause.

In 2008, home fires killed 2,755 people and injured 13,160. Two of every five home fire deaths were in a home with no smoke alarms and another one in five was in a home where the smoke alarms were not working.

This year's theme aims to educate the public on how smoke alarms save lives and why they should be installed and maintained in every home. Having working smoke alarms can cut the chances of dying in a fire in half. The



theme will focus on how to choose, install, and maintain smoke alarms.

The NFPA has taken the lead in public fire safety outreach by serving as the offisponsor of Prevention Week for 88 years. The annual public awareness and safety commemoration, which is proclaimed by the president of the United States each year, is observed by fire departments in the United States and Canada to mark the anniversary of the great Chicago fire of 1871. According to the National Archives and Records Administration's Library Information Center, Fire Prevention Week is the longest running public health and safety observance on record.

The NFPA has been a worldwide leader in providing fire, electrical, building, and

life safety to the public since 1896. The mission of the international nonprofit organization is to reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life by providing and advocating consensus codes and standards, research, training, and education.

The staff at the NAS JRB fire prevention office will have fire prevention activities here on base. Look for flyers for details. Anyone who wants to talk to the base fire inspectors can call 504 678-4741 or send an e-mail to them at: brett.atwell@navy.mil, wendy.shimmin@navy.mil and james.s.arnold@navy.mil.

For safety tips, statistical information and more, visit the newly launched website at www.firepreventionweek.org or the NFPS's web site at www.nfpa.org.

#### Follow these tips

The Educational Messages Advisory Committee (EMAC) to NFPA's Public Education Division developed the following tips for the testing and maintenance of smoke alarms.

- Choose a smoke alarm that bears the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Install a smoke alarm in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area, and on every level of your home, including the basement.
- Interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.
- Replace batteries in all smoke alarms at least once a year. If an alarm "chirps" warning that the battery is low, replace the battery right away.
- Replace all smoke alarms, including alarms that use 10-year batteries and hard-wired alarms when they are 10 years old or sooner if they do not respond properly when tested.
- Test your smoke alarms at least every month, using the test button or an approved smoke substitute and clean the units, both in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions.

## Coast Guard Air Station Under New Command

In a ceremony held July 16, Coast Guard Cmdr. Frederick C. Riedlin relieved Capt. Edward J. Cubanski as commanding officer of Coast Guard Air Station New Orleans.

Riedlin comes to New Orleans from Hawaii, where he served as the executive officer of Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point. He managed of 250 personnel in execution of missions ranging from search and rescue, fisheries enforcement, law enforcement and environmental protection for the largest area of operations in the Coast Guard.

Cubanski served as commanding officer of Air Station New Orleans from 2008 to 2010. During his tenure, the air station responded to hurricanes Gustav and Ike, the Red River flooding in Fargo, N.D., Tropical Storm Ida, the earthquake in Haiti, the Deepwater Horizon explosion and oil spill, and conducted more than 500 search and rescue cases. Cubanski will transfer to the Coast Guard Eighth District in New Orleans to serve as chief of incident management.



U.S. Coast Guard Cmdr. F. Carl Riedlin addresses crewmembers and guests during a change-of-command ceremony for Coast Guard Air Station New Orleans. The ceremony is a time-honored tradition, which formally restates to officers and enlisted personnel of the command the continuity and authority of command. Air Station New Orleans's responsibility includes the area from Apalachicola, Fla., north to Memphis, Tenn., and west to the Louisiana/Texas border and thousands of offshore oil platforms. Photo by Coast Guard PA3 Class Elizabeth H. Bordelon

#### Civilian Employers Visit NOSC, NAS JRB



Cmdr. Tracy Day, Navy Operational Support Center commanding officer, talks with Joshua Braswell, owner of Braswell Construction in Covington, La., during the NOSC employer day at NAS JRB New Orleans.

Employers were given briefings, a tour of the NOSC facility, a lesson in simulated arms training and a chance to pilot a Navy F-18 Hornet via the simulator.

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Accounting from Covington, La., gets a try at piloting a
Navy F-18



Navy F-18 Photos by Tammy Prine
Hornet in the simulator during the NOSC employer day.

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#### **MWR** Events

Aug 4 – Family Luau 3 to 6 p.m. at NAS JRB pool. Hawaiian food, carnival games, sand art, spin art and more.

**Aug. 14- Racquetball Tournament 9 a.m.** at NAS JRB fitness center. The entry deadline is Aug. 6

Aug 21 – Pet Rodeo noon to 3 p.m. at Plaquedilla Park. All pets are welcome. Activities include a pet water park, obstacle course, dancing contest, snottiest and snarkiest contest and a stage for pet talent shows. Awards given for various categories.

Aug 28 - Hurricane 5K run/walk for all- 8:30 a.m. beginning at Plaquedilla Park. The entry deadline is Aug. 20. Cost is \$10 for adults, \$5 for ages 10-15 and free for those under 10 years old. Open to all military, DOD/NAF civilians and dependents.

**Back to school expo for ages 5-17, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** at the NAS JRB fitness center with education/health providers on site to answer questions.

For the complete guide to MWR events for August visit the NAS JRB website -

https://www.cnic.navy.mil/jrborleans/index.htm

#### **MWR Moves**

MWR Admin office has moved from building 192 to building 370 on Russell Ave, the former FFSC offices. The Youth and Teen Center will move in August to a new facility, building 561, on the corner of Chambers and Yorktown. Check with the center for date and time of the grand opening party and back-to-school bash sometime in August.

#### **MOWC Membership Drive**

The Military Officer's Wives' Club of New Orleans is now accepting applications for membership for the 2011 membership-drive.

Membership is open to all current or former military spouses or widow or widower of a commissioned officer or warrant officer of the Army, Navy, Coast Guard, Marine Corps or Air Force, regular, reserve or retired. Associate membership is open to current or former spouses or widow or widower of a federal government service employee with the rating of GS-07 or above, a federal government employee with the rating of GS-07 or above, or a military veteran as a commissioned or warrant officer of the Army, Navy, Coast Guard, Marine Corps or Air Force, active, reserve or retired.

The MOWC is a non-profit organization whose members raise funds to support community organizations adopted by the club and to aid and assist in community work. Sponsored organizations include the Naval Sea Cadets, Eisenhower Squadron; the Young Marines, Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office; and Camp Challenge. Throughout the year the MOWC holds social functions for club members and their guests, which foster friendships and encourage the growth of existing ones.

For more information on the MOWC and to get a membership application visit their website at: http://www.mow-cnola.org.



The Missoula Children's Theater (MCT), with the assistance of some talented Belle Chasse Academy (BCA) students, presented Beauty Lou and the Country Beast July 2 at the BCA gymnasium. More than two dozen students participated in the musical, an original country western adaptation of the classic fairy tale Beauty and the Beast. Through its 40 year existence, MCT seeks to foster developmental life skills through participation in the theater. MCT has entertained and trained countless children in the United States and seventeen other countries since its creation in 1970.

Photo by Andrew Thomas

## Navy Lodge Aboard NSA Officially Closes

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jordan J. Miller

**The Currents' Staff** 

In late July, after 35 years, the Navy Lodge aboard Naval Support Activity (NSA) New Orleans closed it's doors for business.

The 50-room Navy Lodge was a non-appropriated government hotel that offered lodging to service members and their families on permanent change-of-station (PCS) orders and members traveling as part of a temporary duty assignment (TDY).

"We have had admirals, generals, and colonels all stay," said Brenda Mason, Navy Lodge manager. "We have also had a couple of public health groups that came during February to help out Habitat for Humanity and we had the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division here after Hurricane Katrina."

The closure was a part of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission's (BRAC) process that will closing NSA in 2011.

"It makes me sad to see us go. I will miss the people I've worked with." Mason said. "People are depressed that they won't have a place to come to. I think they are a bit discouraged that the lodge could become anybody's property."

The original hotel was built in 1975 and had 22

rooms. According to Mason it was made of a little bit of brick and a lot of wood.

"The original building was aesthetically pleasing," Mason said. "When we asked customers how they liked the new facility many said the old one had a New Orleans down-home kind of feeling."

Because of its construction, the wooden flooring and structure, and the high occupancy rate the lodge became inadequate and modifications were required. The decision to expand was made in 1999 and construction was completed in 2001.

The NSA Navy Lodge won the Edward E. Carlson Award in 1994 and 1999, the



Hospitality Award in 2002, 2004 and 2005, and received the Gold, Silver, and Bronze Pineapple awarded by the American Hotel and Motel Association Educational Institute.

Mason said a demand

must exist in order for the Navy Lodge program to build a new lodge and a watchful eye will be kept on the need for PCS and TDY space at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Or-









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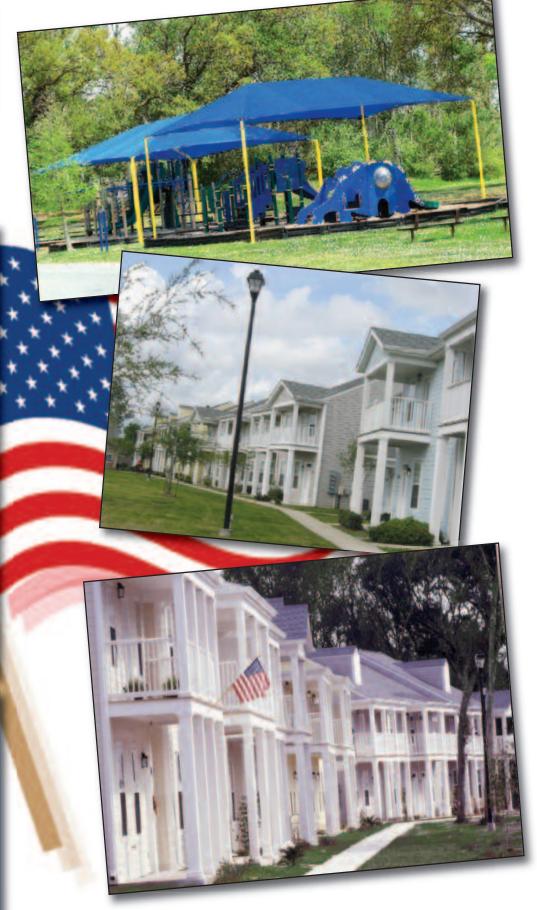
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